

My third week in Malawi began early Monday morning as I traveled to get William Chitsulo from his home a few miles South of Lilongwe. I am still a little nervous driving in the capital city since things can happen quickly in the traffic. Roundabouts, traffic moving on the opposite side of the road, right turns crossing traffic and left turns mimicking our right turns. Trying to remember all these things while minibuses dart in and out of traffic without warning, bicycles and pedestrians all vying for the same road I need. Trucks so wide they need part of my lane to fit, and some that can't go faster than 5-10 mph. Malawi drivers are aggressive and fearless, expecting you to stop or move out of the way as they enter and leave the road.

I picked William up and we began our trek to the congregation where we would speak that evening. When I heard we would stop at three because many had come on foot and bicycle (Some over 12 miles away), I was secretly pleased. We have been working such long hours that I hoped to have a few hours of down time. Like most of the churches, the leaders again wanted the difference between the church and the denominations, church organization and family. We finished and left about 4:00.

The drive to the next location was completely over dirt roads, but as we left I had been led to believe we would quickly arrive at the next location. After about an hour and a half I started to wonder, so I asked how much further. When he told me another two hours, my heart sank. True to their word we did not arrive until about 8:00. This was one of the most remote villages I had visited. A bamboo mat covered the hardened mud floor and the roof was bamboo with grass to slow (but not stop) the rain. This is about as primitive as I see. Since a few days earlier I had a mosquito in the net, I was very careful when unfolding to set it up so nothing could enter, carefully tucking it in all the way around my sleeping pad.

Unfortunately I did not count the mice that inhabit the grass roof. Whenever we sleep homes with grass roofs, you can hear mice moving about from time to time at night, often coming down to the floor and wandering about in the room. But this time I woke up with something jumping inside the net both around and over me. Each leap went about a foot. I assumed at first it was a frog, but when I finally found my flashlight it was a kangaroo mouse leaping from place to place trying to find a way out which I knew was futile because I had worked so hard tucking it under the pad. After several attempts I was able to trap him in the net. Then began the painstaking process of trying to loosen the net and let him out without allowing him to reenter the net. The Costco pharmacist had warned me that rabies was present in Malawi so I was even more careful, not to let him back into the net and not to be bitten while I was letting him out. We were both happy when he hopped away into the night.

The next day we were up early to begin teaching. This time I was informed that the congregation was only a few years old and filled with babes in Christ. So my teaching was on fundamental subjects with more milk than meat. After we finished we started the long trek back to Lilongwe. I had enough confidence to drop William off after dark and drive through Lilongwe.

Next day we were off early to another part of Lilongwe. Since this was to be my last day preaching in Lilongwe, I was relaxed, knowing I would soon have a day to myself. I had been to this congregation last year and they were very excited to have me return. I started at about 10:00 and taught till about 4:00. Several of the men pleaded with William to have me preach the next day in another village nearby. So I gave up the time off and made plans to teach in the afternoon the next day. At least I still had the morning to relax and get my work done.

Soon after drinking my first cup of coffee, Raphael entered the room and told me I was scheduled to preach that evening in Ntchisi. This meant that instead of some time to myself, I had to pack, collect supplies, teach in Kalulu, drive to Mponela with all my bags, then drive up to Ntchisi to teach for an hour in the evening. I learned a long time ago that this is just how things go in Malawi and you have to make the best of it.

I arrived in Ntchisi about 7:00 and taught for an hour from 8:00 to 9:00 on true worship. I had difficulty concentrating during the lesson because I was exhausted, but people were complimentary of the lesson. We rented another rest house for the evening (a step up from the one in Dwangwa last week. I knew I was to preach twice on Saturday and began preparations on the first subject that would be taught at 10:00 in the morning. I got up early and planned the assigned lesson on giving expecting to put together the lesson on the family later in the day. Five minutes before I was to preach they informed us that it was not longer giving, but the family and that I would not preach again in the meeting.

I quickly made the mental adjustments and was soon standing before about 2,000 people with no notes and just a vague idea of what I would do. I don't like this scenario, but it has happened so often you just do the best you can. The lesson took about an hour and was well received. I was a little relieved at not having to preach that afternoon as I had reached a point of exhaustion where I was no longer preaching well. When I am tired there just isn't enough enthusiasm to preach a dynamic lesson. Since I am the only English speaking person present, they don't translate lessons so there isn't much point to sitting and listening. So I spent the afternoon sitting in the car (out of the sun) watching William sell hymn books, raisins and communion cups. It was enough of a break to get my stamina back, and since I had no lesson the next day I was very relaxed.

We left at dusk for a good night's sleep. We then received a call letting me know I would be preaching the next

morning for an hour on church organization. When I asked exactly what this meant I was told that the churches in Mchinji had strayed from the truth and were teaching there were no preachers in the church, only elders and they had purged the area of preachers. Very convenient for elders who wanted to draw away the disciples after themselves.

I developed a lesson on the history of the early church and development of the offices. I started with an overview listed in Eph 4:11. After an introduction emphasizing that the church had the most important work in the world. A work no one else could do and needed all the power Jesus gave to the church. In order to preach the gospel in all the world and edify and build up the saints, Jesus gave the apostles and prophets (who permanently gave us the inspired Scriptures (All truth - Jn 16:13; Once for all delivered Jude 3)). These offices are outlined and defined in Acts 1-7.

Jesus also gave the living gifts for each generation: evangelists, shepherds and teachers to perfect the saints unto the work of ministry. Acts 8 describes Saul laying waste the church and only the apostles remaining in Jerusalem. Everyone else who was scattered went everywhere *preaching* the word. Philip's was one such example, preaching in Samaria and to the Ethiopian Eunuch. Later it was revealed that Philip was an evangelist (Acts 21:8). Timothy and Titus were also evangelists. Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist (2Tim 4:1-5) and Titus to set in order the things that were wanting and appoint elders in every city. How could some brethren say there is no such thing as an evangelist when Jesus gave them as a gift to his church and the Scriptures were clear that both Philip and Timothy did that work. Finally I then I was an evangelist going from place to place in Malawi listening to concerns of elders and setting in order what was lacking. It was well received and I was asked to preach this same lesson in Kapiri in Mchinji this week, which I intend to do since it is in the heart of where this error is raging.

I am now back in Mponela with a half day off to look forward to. I have completed the first half of the trip and have included a map to show where I have taught and preached the last three weeks. I said goodbye to William Chitsulo today. My final three weeks will be with William Chimcande and will be in Dowa, Kasungu and Mchinji. Not sure what new and exciting adventures await, but trust in the Lord to help me through it. Gives new meaning to "*anywhere with Jesus I can safely go, anywhere he leads me in this world below...*"